

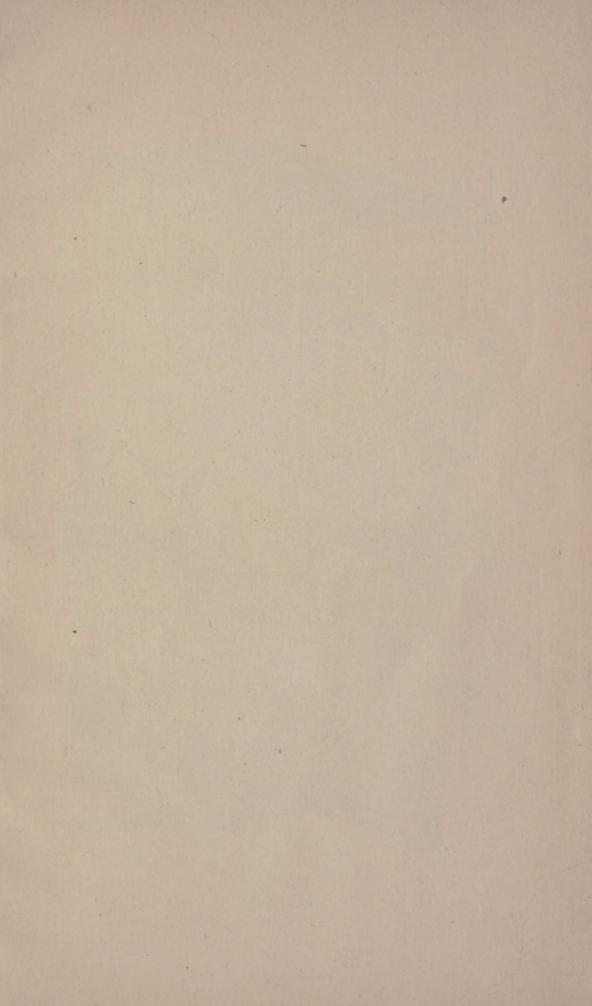
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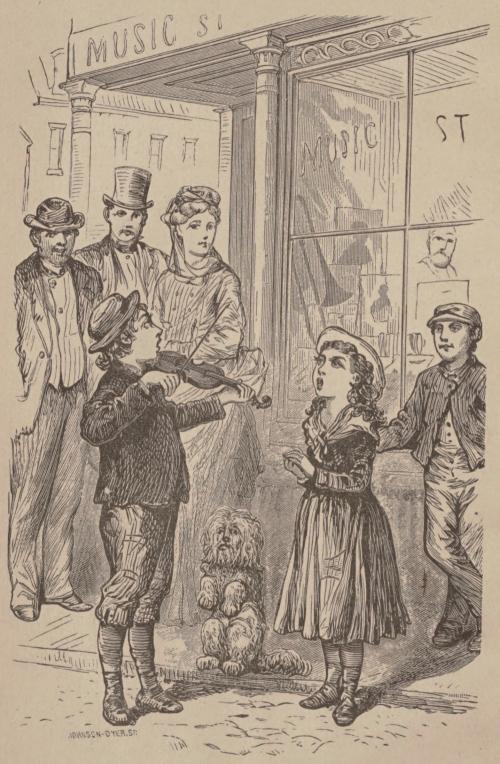












"CALL ME HOME, MOTHER." - Page 46.

CHERRY, THE SINGER.

A STORY FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

MRS. S. B. C. SAMUELS,

AUTHOR OF "ADELE," "ERIC," "HERBERT," "NETTIE'S TRIAL,"

"JOHNSTON'S FARM," "ENNISFELLEN,"

ETC., ETC.

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1875.



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DEDICATED

TO

FATHER AND MOTHER.

AND AND THE PARTY AND THE PARTY STATE

PREFACE.

"OF making many books there is no end." What shall be said of this one?

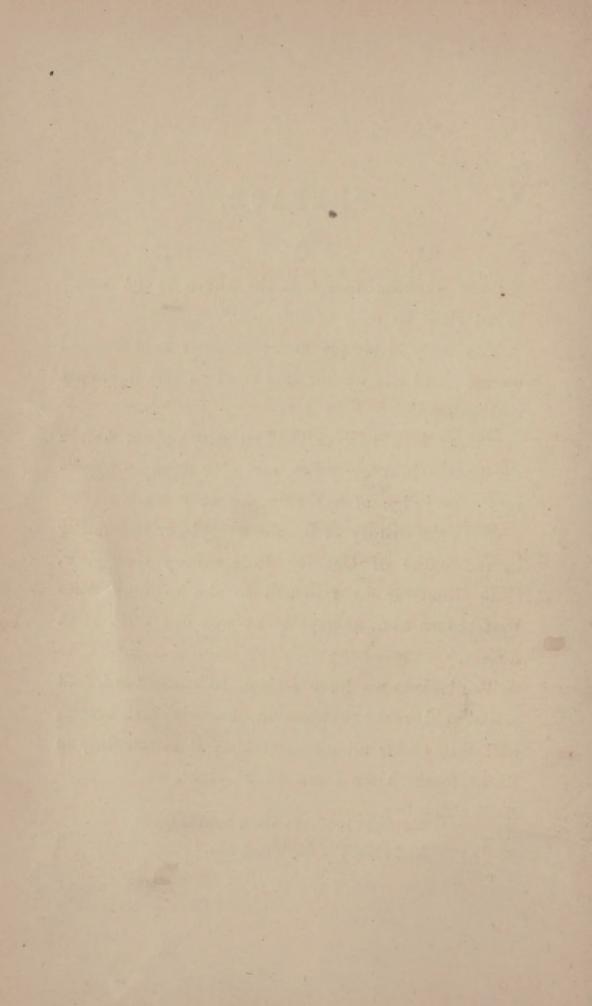
The story is simple and touching: it is founded on fact, and the author has tried to tell it simply and naturally.

Cherry is a real child, who may appear before the public in a few years, and give them an opportunity to judge of her rare, sweet voice.

With the history of Jamie, everybody is familiar in the name of Charley Ross. May that poor, little wanderer be returned to the aching hearts that mourn him, as happily as was our little hero, Jamie.

The lessons we have striven to convey are, that we should resist temptation, bravely and boldly, and that under all circumstances it is our duty to do that which we know to be right.

"For right is right: since God is God:
And right the day must win."



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CHERRY, THE SINGER.

CHAPTER I.

HAPPY CHERRY.

NE fair June day, little Cherry Halstead was playing in her father's garden, and the thrushes and finches were singing to her their sweetest songs.

The cottage looked like a bower of roses; the hardy climbers were peeping in at the windows, and reaching out to the eaves, and safe within their shelter, breathing their delicious perfume, the little patient mother sparrows sat, guarding their delicate eggs, in snug little nests. All the birds loved Cherry, because she was a little singer, like themselves.

But Cherry was not singing on that bright, sunny afternoon. She was playing very quietly, and her thoughts were busy with a sad subject.

"How sorry mamma looked, this morning, when papa said he would 'drive down to Rice's!' I wish he wouldn't go there again, it makes mamma feel so badly. I mean to tell him so," thought Cherry.

Just then she heard her father's voice calling her.

"Cherry, my pet, want to go to ride?"

"Yes, papa," she answered, scrambling up, and running to meet him. "Muff! Muff! Come, Muff!"

Muff was Cherry's little dog,— a soft, white ball of wool, with bright, black eyes, and dancing feet: he came flying down the garden walk after her, upsetting himself and nearly upsetting Cherry, in his eagerness to run before her and to bark.

Mrs. Halstead was standing at the cottage door, with baby Robbie in her arms. She laughed at Muff's capers, as Cherry came towards her.

"Come here, dear, and let me straighten your hat," she said to Cherry, and then she kissed the little girl, and whispered, "You must love papa, Cherry."

She could not tell what impulse prompted her to say those words. They seemed to escape her lips without her will, — a sort of foreboding.

"I do love him," Cherry answered, with her arms about her mother's neck; "and I love you too,

mamma, and dear little Robbie." And giving each a hug and a kiss, she danced off to meet her father. Muff stopped to lap the baby's little fat cheeks, and then scampered after her.

"You've kept Comet waiting, and you know he won't stand," said Mr. Halstead, flinging away his cigar. "Whoa, Comet! Come, Cherry, jump in."

Cherry said Muff must be put in first, and her father laughingly complied.

"You're a little tyrant, Cherry, and Muff is another," he said, as he tumbled the little dog into the buggy. As they drove off, Cherry turned to throw a kiss to her mother.

Mrs. Halstead still stood in the doorway. The baby was dancing and crowing in her arms. She gave Cherry an answering smile; but the little girl thought she saw a touch of sadness in the smile, and was thus reminded of her own thoughts.

"Papa," said she, suddenly, "which way are we going?"

"Round by Rice's tavern," answered Mr. Halstead. "Why?"

"That was why mamma looked so sad," said Cherry, musingly. "She always does look sad when you go to Rice's, papa. What makes you go there?"

Mr. Halstead did not answer directly. His face

flushed, and he turned from his little daughter, evidently disturbed by her question.

"Why did he go there? Was it worth while to make his gentle wife suffer so much anxiety, and to learn to shrink from his child's innocent eyes? Was it right for him to waste his time and his talents with the friends he met there? Was it well for him to unman himself, as he had twice done lately?"

These questions, with others, flashed through his mind, and his better nature answered them. "It was neither right nor well; and for the sake of his family, if not for his own, he would put a stop to it."

"Cherry," said he, turning to the child, who feared she had offended him, "mamma need not feel sad' any more. After to-day I will not go to Rice's."

"O, papa, I'm so glad!" That was all that Cherry could say; but her bright smile, the glad light in her blue eyes, and the way in which she hugged little Muff, were very expressive.

It was a noble resolve on Mr. Halstead's part to turn from temptation; but it would have been far better for him if he had only said "now, at once," instead of "after to-day."

When we are brought to acknowledge that a thing is wrong, the only safe course is to forsake the evil

at once, and keep out of the way of its temptations; for while we hesitate it may overcome us.

Cherry, however, was satisfied. Her father had given his word. That was enough for her; and when he drew rein, and Comet came to a stand at the tavern door, she smiled brightly in his face, as he lifted her to the sidewalk.

- "You can take Muff with you, and run and play in the garden until I come out," he said.
- "Yes, papa, it is such a nice garden! You must give me one kiss, papa, I am so happy."

He stooped to kiss the sweet red lips upraised to his.

"What a happy little child you are, Cherry! Now run and have a good time, dear."

He stood looking after the little girl, as she tripped towards a honeysuckle arbor, trilling a merry song.

"I will keep my promise," he said softly to himself. "This is my last visit here. With such a home as mine, and blessed with such a household, surely I may withstand temptation."

The soft June air blew into his face the sweet breath of fragrant flowers. A little purple finch sat upon a rose tree near by, swinging with the breeze and singing joyously. Beyond, by the door of the

arbor, Cherry stood, turning back, and throwing him a kiss, with a pretty little gesture of delight. Then she went into the arbor, and he turned towards the hotel. This was the picture which in after years he could never forget.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE IS THE CHILD?

WONDER why papa doesn't come, Robbie," Mrs. Halstead said, softly, to her little boy, as she lighted the evening lamp and drew the white shades.

The room was cozy and bright. The piano stood open, with music on the rack; choice pictures hung upon the walls, and a glass dish, filled with roses and geranium leaves, stood upon the centre-table, among the books.

She looked around, as she turned back to the rocking-chair to resume her work, and thought, with a smile, it was a pleasant home to which Cherry and papa would return.

Robbie lay in his wicker-basket, looking at the light, and cooing forth his satisfaction. Presently his mother turned from her work, listened a minute, and then gave him a bright smile.

"There they come, darling. That is Comet's step, and tired enough my little Cherry must be."

Yes, it was surely Comet. He had gone around to the stable. Cherry would come directly in. No—she was waiting for papa. But presently her husband came up to the door with lingering steps. His white face terrified her.

"What is it, Robert?" she cried, going over to him; "what is the matter?" Then, with quick alarm, "Is Cherry hurt?"

"Amy," he answered, pitifully, taking her trembling hand in his, "do not despise me, Amy. I have been weak and faithless again. I have been drinking at Rice's; and O, my poor, little wife, how can I tell it to you? I have lost our little Cherry."

"Lost her, Robert!" gasped poor Mrs. Halstead.

"Yes," he answered, sadly. "I took her to Rice's, and left her playing in the garden there, while I went in. I did not mean to be gone a minute; but I was—an hour or more. Once I heard Muff barking, and—O, Amy! Amy! when I came out she was gone. We could not find her."

He bowed his head upon his hands. His anguish was too deep for tears. O, the suffering and the shame! It was all his fault; his alone! While he was basely betraying his word to his little daughter, and making himself unfit to protect her, she most needed his protection. He felt that his

wife had a right to despise him. He despised himself.

Mrs. Halstead saw how he suffered. She deeply pitied him.

"Robert," she said, softly kissing his damp forehead, "do not blame yourself too much, dear; and do not give up to grief. It is our duty now to find our darling. What have you done?"

"Everything. Searched the town, called upon the police, and telegraphed in every direction. There isn't a clew."

"There must be," said Mrs. Halstead. "Cherry is five years old. She knows her name, and our names, and the name of the town we live in. She will surely remember these; and we must find her. But O, my little, delicate darling! What can she do, alone in the wide, wide world! O, who could have been so cruel and wicked as to bring this great sorrow upon us?"

"Who, indeed?" said Mr. Halstead, raising his head. "I know I have not been the man I ought to have been, but I have not an enemy in the world to my knowledge. It could not have been for gain. We are not rich enough for that. Amy, dear, it must be poor consolation to you now, but it may be some — I will never again in my life touch a

drop of wine, or any other intoxicating drink. May God help me to keep this promise inviolate!"

"Amen!" said Mrs. Halstead, solemnly, with bowed head. "Your promise is a great comfort to me, Robert. I feel that Cherry will surely come back. We will put our trust in the Lord; He knows where our darling is. He will lead his little lamb. But we must do our part, too, Robert. You are faint and tired; let me give you some tea. I will send Mary for Mrs. Swan to come and sit with Robbie, and then we will drive to the town, and see if anything has been heard."

To please his wife, Mr. Halstead compelled himself to swallow a little food.

Their neighbor came in, full of quiet sympathy, and took charge of Robbie. Mrs. Halstead begged her to sit with the door open, and the window curtains up, and to keep a bright light.

"For the dear child may wander home alone," said she. "She may be here before we get back."

Mrs. Swan promised to do so. She said she hoped Cherry would appear; but in her heart she feared that the child had fallen into the river, which swept the grassy border of the tavern garden.

In the town Mr. Halstead learned that a strange woman had been seen in the garden in the afternoon, but had not been seen since Cherry's disappearance. Some people thought that this woman had kidnapped little Cherry, while others thought that she must have fallen into the river; but the police said, from the fact of the dog's disappearance too, that the child had been stolen, and that the dog was with her. They were working in every direction. The people, meanwhile, were searching the woods, and making arrangements for dragging the river.

There was nothing for the unhappy parents to do but to return home. Their darling might be there to welcome them: but no, she was not there.

They could see from the driveway, in the bright glow of the lamp, Mrs. Swan quietly hushing Robbie in her lap, while Mary stood at the window, shading her eyes from the light, and looking up and down the road.

CHAPTER III.

CHERRY IS STOLEN.

HE first thing Cherry did when left alone in Rice's garden, was to carol a sweet little song. Then she turned laughingly to her companion.

"Now, Muff," said she, "before we play in the garden I'm going to make you do all the pretty tricks you know. Come into this arbor and sit up, sir."

But Muff, instead of "sitting up," flew in through the door, barking frantically.

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Cherry, hastening after him. "What is it, Muff?"

Then she spied, in one corner of the arbor, slowly uncurling herself from a bench, a rough-looking, ragged woman. Something in her appearance made Cherry start for the door again. She glanced around, and saw her father just going into the hotel. She thought of running after him, when Muff gave

a cry of pain, and Cherry turned again and darted to his side.

The woman was now sitting up on the bench, and she held Muff fast in her lap. The little dog looked appealingly to his little mistress, and then turned and growled fiercely at the stranger.

- "Please put him down," said Cherry. "He is a good little dog."
- "O, I know that, dearie, if he did bark and growl at me," said the woman, laughing a very unpleasant laugh.
- "I'll not let him do so any more," said Cherry, if you'll please put him down."
- "Does he know any pretty tricks, dearie?" asked the woman, still holding the unwilling little prisoner.
- "O, yes, lots," said Cherry, brightly. "Let him get down, and I'll show you what he can do."

And Cherry actually lifted him off the woman's knees, who reluctantly let him go.

"Now be quiet, Muff," said Cherry. "Be quiet, sir! Sit up."

Muff was accustomed to obey this order promptly, but now he demurred, making a series of runs at the stranger, growling and barking. The little dog knew instinctively that she was not to be trusted. But Cherry was a maiden of her word. She made Muff be quiet, and then again she bade him to sit up; and seeing how resolute his little mistress was, Muff sat up very prettily, waving his fore paws in the air.

"Now, one, two, three," said Cherry; and at the word three, the little creature rose on his hind legs, and walked on two feet all around the summerhouse.

"Lie down!" said Cherry, and the dog obeyed.
"Be dead!" she ordered, and all the little limbs were stretched rigidly out, and the bright little eyes were closed, but the tail kept up an expectant, wary motion.

"Come!" said Cherry; and at that signal the little dog sprang into her arms.

Having performed her promise, Cherry now wished to leave the arbor, but the stranger prevented her.

"Don't leave me," said she. "I won't hurt you, dearie. I wouldn't harm you for anything. You have a very sweet voice. I heard you sing just now. What is your name, dearie?"

"Cherry Halstead."

"Cherry. That is a sweet name, isn't it? and do you live close by here?"

"O, no," answered Cherry; "I live three miles from here."

"O, do you? And how came you here, dearie?"

"I came with my papa," answered Cherry.
"He is in the hotel," she added, edging off towards the door. Something in the woman's looks and words warning her away.

The stranger put out her hand to detain the child, and turning her head, appeared to be listening for some sound which she wished to hear. In another minute she bent over Cherry, saying, in a very coaxing voice,—

"How would you like to have me give you a cunning little black puppy?"

"Why," said Cherry, eagerly, "have you got one?"

"Yes," answered the woman, "I have got two; a little black one and a little white one, curly, like Muff. Come with me and see them. You shall have whichever one you want. Come; they are right down here." And before Cherry had time to hesitate she was hurried across the garden, still tightly holding little Muff, and down to the river bank.

A small boat was drawn up to the bank, screened from view by the bushes, and in it sat a boy. His frightened expression changed to one of

surprise when he saw the woman appear with Cherry. A heap of rubbish lay in the bottom of the bott. The woman pointed to them.

"They are there in that rubbish," she said, and lifted Cherry into the boat.

Muff growled and barked again, but nobody minded him. Cherry, though feeling a little afraid and uneasy, began at once to look for the puppies. In a few minutes she had searched the rubbish through, and failed to find them.

"They are not here," she said, looking towards the woman. Then suddenly the poor child started and turned very pale. The woman was rowing as fast as she could row; the hotel garden was far behind.

"O," cried Cherry, "don't take me away! don't take me away! O, please, take me back to papa!"

"Be quiet," said the woman sternly, and glanced around to see if the child's cries had been heard. "I'll take you back in a few minutes, if you will be good. Sit down in the boat and keep quiet. If you cry out again I'll throw you into the water. I'll take you back if you'll keep still."

Cherry obeyed. She had no confidence now in the woman's promise, but she was afraid. She sat forlornly on the rubbish heap, hugging Muff, and crying silently. The little dog lapped her wet cheeks and tried to comfort her by his sympathy.

The boy looked at the poor child with as much pity as he dared to show, for he too was evidently afraid of the woman.

They were fast leaving the town. The twilight was beginning to darken, and Cherry grew more and more anxious. "Where could this terrible stranger be taking her? Would she never see her dear father and mother again? Would Robbie grow up without knowing his little sister? Could she never, never go home?"

The woman sat sternly silent, rowing still, as unyielding as fate, moving the boat onward and onward. By and by lights twinkled here and there in the distance. It was night, and happy children were in their homes; but the boat on the river moved swiftly away with its forlorn, unwilling passenger, until it was lost in the darkness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SADDENED HOME.

ID the birds know that Cherry was missing? So it seemed to Mrs. Halstead. They did not sing as they used to sing when her darling played in the garden. The roses, too, were faded, and the little sparrows had left their nests. The whole world seemed dark to her now, for Cherry, bright, loving, happy child, was gone.

How the poor mother's heart ached for her lost darling! How she had hoped against hope, day after day, week after week, and no news came! Everything had been done that could be done, experienced officers were yet on the watch, and a large reward was offered for the recovery of the child. Many people believed that she was drowned. But her father and mother did not think so, and the police also were sure that she was stolen. Still it was strange that they could find no clew to her disappearance, for Cherry had been gone three months.

Robbie was toddling about, and beginning to talk. How his little sister would have enjoyed aiding his unsteady feet, and how she would have laughed over him and petted him at each new word he learned to lisp! Little did Robbie know of what he had lost! He was a merry, happy fellow, full of fun and frolic, and he could not understand grief. With him, his father and mother had to put aside their anxiety; and in this he was a great comfort to them both.

Mr. Halstead had changed greatly since Cherry's disappearance. He was saddened, and had grown grave and thoughtful. There had been a great temperance revival in the town, and his name was first on the rolls of a prominent society, some of the leading members of which were urging him to become their lecturer, and to travel about, giving free lectures on temperance, the expenses of which would be paid by the society.

He was a fluent speaker, and his heart was in the cause. He wished to accept the proposition, for it seemed to him that there would be a chance, in his travels from place to place, of finding Cherry. He only hesitated on account of leaving his wife. Mrs. Halstead would not go away from home. "The child," she thought, "might come back at any time, and she must find her home and her mother, poor

little wanderer!" So she and Robbie would stay at the cottage; but she was anxious that Mr. Halstead should travel and give the lectures, hoping that his mind might be diverted from his sad loss.

While they were yet uncertain what to decide, Mrs. Halstead's brother wrote, offering to come and stay with her; and as she was thus provided with a protector, Mr. Halstead accepted the offer of the temperance board.

He travelled from place to place always well received, and always successful; constantly thinking of his little daughter, and ever on the lookout for her. His sorrow gave an earnestness and depth to his character, which carried conviction to the hearts of his hearers. Many husbands and fathers turned from drunkenness to virtue; sons were restored to manhood, and wives and mothers blessed his name.

Wherever he went Mr. Halstead found his way among the poorer classes; his words of advice were followed by words and deeds of kindness, helping on those who were trying to do right; while he could sympathize with and pity all who were in the wrong. All loved and honored him. He knew that he was doing good.

He wrote home to his wife cheering letters of the blessing of God upon his mission; and he told her of his faith and hope, which seemed to grow stronger with time, that one day he would find his little daughter.

Mrs. Halstead was thankful for the change in her husband, grateful for the good he was permitted to do, and as hopeful as he about Cherry, of whom she never thought as dead.

And so things went on, and Robbie grew into a fine little lad, denying his babyhood. The roses budded again, the birds sang and built their nests. Still, there was no news of the little wanderer to cheer the brave hearts who hoped on against hope.

People talked of the case as strange and singular. It was an old story now — a year old.

Who could tell what the year had done for Cherry, friendless and alone!

Ah! not friendless. Cherry was a lamb of God, in his tender care. Her father, far away in the west, and her mother in her New England home, prayed every night and morn that God would bless and keep their darling, and bring her safe to them.

CHAPTER V.

CHERRY FINDS A LITTLE FRIEND.

OME, get up! Why don't you start when I call you?"

Cherry sat up in bed quickly; she pushed her pretty curls from her face, and opened her blue eyes with a startled look. Where was she? Who was speaking so roughly to her? This was not her little crib, with its dainty linen. This was a great yellow bed, with a patchwork quilt and coarse, soiled sheets. Her mother's loving face was gone, and in its place there were the stern, cruel eyes of the dreadful woman. O, yes, she remembered now; and closing her eyes with a weary sigh, while the tear-drops stole down her cheeks, little Cherry slid to the floor, and looked for her clothes.

"Put on those things in the chair," said the woman.

Cherry obeyed. They were not the dainty little

clothes her mother had dressed her in. They were coarse and ragged. But Cherry did not care much. She was too miserable. She silently dressed herself as well as she could, making sad work with the buttons and button-holes.

"Don't you stir from this room," said the woman, turning to her. "I'm going down stairs; and if you don't mind me, I will catch you and beat you. Do you hear that?"

"Yes'm," said little Cherry, meekly, with quivering lips, while the woman threw a shawl over her head, and took up a basket.

"Then see to it that you mind me," she added, shaking a finger at the frightened child, as she left the room; and the child breathed more freely.

Presently Cherry heard a familiar whining and scratching at the door; it opened, and Muff darted in, and in an instant was in her arms, lapping the little tear-stained face, and comforting the poor little aching heart.

The boy who had been in the boat was standing in the doorway, looking at the pair with eyes full of deep pity.

Presently he came up to Cherry. "'Marm' has gone," said he, kindly. "She won't be here for half an hour. Let me help you, little girl. I'm very sorry for you."

"What made her take me away?" sobbed the child.

"I don't know," said the boy. She stole you — didn't she? She stole me, too, a long time ago. I mean to get away from her, though, some day. I'll get you away, too, and take you home."

"O, will you?" cried poor Cherry. "When will you?"

"Just as soon as I can. Just as soon as I find a chance. But don't you tell. Don't you breathe a word of it; for if 'Marm' finds it out she will whip us."

"No, I'll never tell," said Cherry, trembling.
"I love you; you are a good boy if you will take
me home to mamma and papa."

"I will," he said: "and don't you cry and fret. Try to bear it now. It makes her mad to see you cry. Be a good girl, and don't cry. She will treat you better."

Cherry stifled her sobs, and wiped her little wet cheeks with her hands. Her new friend kissed her, and then fastened the buttons which troubled her so much, and washed her face and hands, and combed her hair with a bit of comb. Then he led her to a chair, gave her some bread and milk in a bowl, and Cherry fed herself and Muff.

After she had eaten all she could, the boy took

a violin from a shelf on the wall and played. Cherry looked on and smiled, then she actually laughed, and presently began singing the same tune, in her sweet, clear voice, while her little feet swayed back and forth, and both hands waved to the rhythm of the music. Muff looked on in goodnatured approval, and wagged his tail for the first time since his capture.

Meantime "Marm" had returned. She stood in the doorway, herself unnoticed, an observer of . the scene within. A smile of satisfaction was on her face. She waited until the tune was played through, and then spoke to Cherry in a kinder tone than she had yet used.

- "You can sing well, child."
- "Yes'm," said Cherry, shyly, the smile dying away, and a frightened look taking its place.
- "You needn't fear me," said the woman, more softly. "If you mind me, and don't try to get away, or talk to folks, I'll be kind enough to you. But if ever I catch you speaking to a living soul but me or Jamie, I'll roast you alive."

This terrible threat turned Cherry white. She looked appealingly to Jamie, and saw that he too was afraid of this dreadful woman. Muff sprang into Cherry's lap, laid his head on his fore paws, and growled.

"I'm not going to hurt you, unless you drive me to it," said the woman, more kindly; "and you'll have no harder work to do than singing to Jamie's fiddle, and showing off your little dog's tricks; so clear your brow, and be ready to learn the songs I will teach you. Do you know any yourself besides the one you sang in the garden?"

Cherry nodded. She was thinking, just then, of a little hymn her mamma had taught her. It seemed to her like a voice from home now, and she began to sing it softly.

- "Jesus says that we must love him, Helpless as the lambs are we; But he very kindly tells us That our Shepherd he will be.
- "Heavenly Father, please to watch us; Guard us both by night and day; Pity show to little children, Who, like lambs, too often stray.
- "We are always prone to wander;
 Please to keep us from each snare;
 Teach our infant hearts to praise thee
 For thy kindness and thy care."

She sang the first verse alone, but before she was half through with the second Jamie had caught

the air, and played it upon his violin, listening with delight to the words.

"I used to know that," said he, smiling to Cherry; "it was in my 'Songs for Little Ones.' Sing it again, Cherry."

She sang it again, and Jamie joined in the words and played the air. What a comfort was the music to these two poor children. Playing and singing, they thought no more of their sorrow while the music lasted. The woman had not meant a hymn when she asked Cherry to sing. Something, however, kept her from stopping the child, and she stood and listened. What power was in that simple little hymn! She turned her head from the children, and a tear-drop fell upon her hand. She, too, had once known it, and her memory went back to her childhood's home, showing her to herself an innocent child, standing at her mother's knee, learning the simple words. It was only for a moment, however. She crushed the memory in her heart, and turning, said to the children, "That will do now; put up the fiddle, Jamie, and wash up those things. I'm going to pack up."

"Are we going away from here?" asked Jamie, moving to obey her, and looking round in surprise.

"We are that," said she. "We're going to Boston."

The children looked at each other in dismay. Already they began to rely on one another.

Cherry's eyes filled, but a warning look from Jamie made her control her tears.

It did not take long to "pack," for there was not much in the room. Cherry held Muff tight in her arms, and Jamie grasped his darling violin. Two ragged straw hats were given to the children. The woman carried her own bundle, and they started for the wharf, where they took a boat for Boston.

CHAPTER VI.

LITTLE JAMIE'S HISTORY.

AMIE," said Cherry, stealing to his side, and putting her little hand into one of his; "Jamie, do you know the name of this town we are leaving?"

- "Yes, it's Portland."
- "I thought so. I've been to Portland with papa. You must remember, Jamie, that we came from Portland, so we can find the way—"
- "Sh!" Jamie exclaimed, pressing her little fingers. Don't talk of it, Cherry. We'll remember. I'm dreadfully afraid Marm 'll hear you," he added, whispering. "She watches us all the time."

Just then an officer of the deck came along, and spoke kindly to the forlorn little ones.

- "Well, little folks, do you like the water?"
- "Yes, sir," answered Jamie, and both children raised their eyes to his. Theirs were so full of trouble that the kind-hearted man was touched,

and sat down beside them. He intended to question them, but "Marm" was too watchful to allow that.

- "Come, children," said she, approaching them, "I'm going to give you something nice." She was speaking so sweetly that she hardly knew her own voice.
- "Are those your children, ma'am?" asked the officer, rising.
 - "Yes, indeed, sir; they are my own."
- "They don't look just like you, that's a fact," said the officer. "I don't half believe her," he muttered to himself, as she pulled the children away. "What sad, sad eyes they had. I half believe they are stolen. I'll find out about it if I can get a chance to talk with them." He turned to his work, but the memory of their mute appeal haunted him. "What ever," he thought, "but some great sorrow could bring such utter sadness to a child's eyes?"

"Marm" dragged them away out of his sight, and then, instead of "something nice," gave them both a severe box on the ear, and bade them keep close beside her, and not to speak to anybody. She took great care that the good-natured officer had no chance to get any information from them.

They comforted and consoled one another as best

they could. Cherry trembled and sobbed, and Jamie's eyes flashed upon "Marm" in indignant wrath. For what she could do to him he did not care much, but bore it silently. He could not bear, however, to see little Cherry hurt.

"Stop crying, now," she said, threateningly. "I'm going to take you to the cabin if you don't stop at once."

Cherry did not dare to cry. She stifled down her sobs, and presently began to enjoy looking out, with Jamie, upon the pleasant scene around them.

Stately vessels were moving out to sea with all sails set. Others were coming in laden with freight. A steamer went puffing by. Little boats and yachts were here and there, some flying by with merry parties of pleasure, and others lazily rocking on the waves. Overhead the sky was blue and clear, and the water around the steamer was of the same color, save where the paddles sent up flashes of silver foam. Off in the west, the horizon was all ablaze with crimson and golden light, which seemed to be melting into the water. The fresh breeze came up from the sea, and blew in their faces. A gull flew overhead, with a mournful cry. Cherry nestled up to Jamie, and thrust her little hand, wet with tears, into his.

"That is God's home," she whispered to him,

pointing to the beautiful western sky. "Perhaps he sees us now. We must ask him to take care of us, Jamie."

"Let's ask him now," Jamie whispered back. Then the two little things bowed their faces in their hands, and sent up from their hearts a childish prayer, full of faith, and trust, and love.

Slowly the brilliant scene faded; twilight settled down, and the stars came out one by one. Cherry's head leaned upon Jamie's shoulder. She was fast asleep; a happy smile played round her mouth. She was dreaming of home. Muff lay watchful at her feet. Jamie sat quietly, gazing off over the water. His heart was full. It was more than a year since he had been taken from his home. He had kissed his mamma, and gone out to play on the sidewalk. A buggy had driven up, with a man and this woman "Marm" sitting in it. They asked him if he wouldn't like a ride. He wanted to go to ride, and said he would "run and ask mamma." But they would not wait for this. The man told him to jump in, and the woman said his mother would not care. So they coaxed him into the carriage and then drove away, and he never saw his dear mamma again. He heard, from their conversation, that they expected his father to buy him back for a large sum of money. But day after day

went by, and nothing came of it but trouble and worry, for the man and woman were always quarrelling about it. Then, one day, he remembered walking out with her, and seeing a picture of himself on a handbill posted up on the wall. He saw the word Reward! and tried to read the bill; but "Marm" hurried him home, and the next day they travelled away — far away.

The man left them, and Jamie had not seen him since. He had heard that the man was dead. "Marm" never let him talk about his home. He was determined to get away from her, and find his way back. Every night and morning he repeated the little prayer his mother had taught him, with a very homesick, sober little face; but he never gave up the idea of getting home, and now that he had Cherry too to help, he would try to find her home first.

Jamie was a very manly little fellow. His family were rich; at home he had beautiful toys and charming books, and all things that are generally provided for loved and petted children. Of these, however, he seldom thought. It was for his mother's love he yearned, and for his father's kind voice and smile. He was a tender, sympathetic child, full of music. Music had always been a keen source of delight to him. His parents were very proud of

his talent for music, and had been to a great deal of expense in having him taught the violin. Of course so young a child could not be a wonderful player, and Jamie could do nothing extraordinary or difficult; but he could catch an air very quickly, and play it with expression. It happened that when he was taken away he had his violin with him, and that was of as much comfort to him as little Muff was to Cherry.

By and by "Marm" carried them off to the cabin. Cherry scarce wakened when put into her berth. Muff nestled close to her; Jamie was near, and soon sound asleep. "Marm" made herself comfortable on two chairs, and slept beside them. She would not risk the chance of having them spoken to again.

The next morning she woke the children early, and told them to follow her. She took them ashore when she saw that the officer who had noticed them was busily engaged. The children were very hungry, but she told them they would get nothing to eat till she had found lodgings.

This it was not easy to do in the reputable part of the city where they happened to be, for "Marm" was not at all prepossessing; but finally the pleading eyes of the two children induced a poor widow woman to take them in. She had two good rooms

to let — a kitchen and bed room. These, though poorly furnished, were neat and clean, — a great improvement on all former lodging-rooms that Jamie could remember.

"Marm" bought some milk of the landlady, and gave the children each a bowl of it, with some fresh bread. Cherry shared hers with Muff. She was hungry, but still too homesick to have much heart for anything. After breakfast "Marm" gave Jamie two songs, and told him to teach them to Cherry while she went out, locking the door and taking the key with her.

They were much happier when she was gone. Cherry brightened into something of her old self, and quickly learned her task, and another song that Jamie knew. He played the airs on his violin, and they sang the songs together.

CHAPTER VII.

SINGING IN THE STREETS.

HEN Marm returned she had with her a bundle, which she opened upon the table. In it were some second-hand clothes, nothing like Cherry's pretty garments of home-make, but vastly better than the rags they had on.

There was a dress for Cherry, rather long, coarse shoes and stockings. A red handkerchief, like the one Marm wore pinned about her throat, and a coarse straw hat.

For Jamie, there was a pair of pants reaching just below his knees. A jacket, several sizes too large, and a hat like Cherry's.

Thus attired, she ushered the two children to the street, leaving Muff sobbing and whining alone at home.

"We are going to sing and play to the people," whispered Jamie.

"O!" said Cherry, shrinking back, "must we?"

"Yes," answered Jamie, quickly; "but don't be afraid. Nobody will notice us. We'll sing up loud, and people will pay us money."

"But I can't. I am afraid," said little Cherry.

Marm was ahead of them, looking for a good place for them to stand. Jamie saw this, and whispered eagerly,—

"Cherry, dear, we must do it, and we must try our best, for when we try to get away from her we'll have to earn money this way for ourselves."

"She won't let us take Muff out," said Cherry with a sob. "I won't go without Muff."

"No," said Jamie, "we'll take Muff and the violin."

Just then Marm turned, and saw Cherry with the tears in her eyes.

"Are you fretting for the dog?" she asked.

"Yes 'm," answered Jamie.

"You've no need to," said she. "I'm going to let you teach him some new tricks, and take him along soon as he knows 'm."

"That makes it all right, Cherry," said Jamie; and the little girl went on with better heart.

Presently Marm turned into Washington Street, with its busy throng of people hurrying by. She

placed the children before a store and told them to begin.

Jamie tuned his violin and began the air, and then both children, with their rare, sweet voices began to sing.

No wonder people paused and listened. Music like theirs is seldom heard in the streets. They sang their three songs again and again. A shower of pennies fell into Jamie's hat when he passed it round at Marm's order.

They moved off, and took up a new position before a music store.

Here they sang for some time. A number of people were in the store looking over new pieces and buying music. As the voices of the singers floated in, many of them paused to listen. Among them was one young man, a composer of popular songs.

Little Cherry's sweet, plaintive voice went straight to his heart. He walked to the door of the store, and stood looking at the child with her pale, sad face and pleading voice.

Cherry was singing one of his own songs; it was one of those which Jamie had lately taught her,—
"Call me home, Mother;" and though far beyond her years, the child felt that it expressed the longing of her own heart, and sang it "with a tear in

her voice," as an eminent German composer afterwards said of her.

"CALL ME HOME, MOTHER.

"I had a dream of home last night,
And mother, dear, of thee.

I heard thy same sweet song again,
That so oft was sung to me.

I felt thy kiss upon my brow;
So lifelike did it seem,
That waking, I was sick at heart,

To find 'twas but a dream.

"Call me home mother, call me home;
Send but a word for me.

My heart is breaking with the longing
To return to thee.

"I never knew how much thy love
Did shield me night and day;
I never learned to prize it right,
Until 'twas cast away.
O! could it but return again—
I know it cannot be—
Alas! I can but sigh and weep
For home, and love, and thee.

"Call me home, mother, call me home, Send but a word for me; My heart is breaking with the longing To return to thee." As the musician listened, he longed to take the little thing in his arms and comfort her. Jamie, too, made a great impression upon him; the true, sweet tone which the rapt little fellow drew from his violin was wonderful for a child of his age.

The song ceased, and the musician became suddenly aware that many others beside himself had been interested in the song. At some one's request one of the clerks asked the singers to repeat it. Marm bade Jamie take his hat and collect their pennies first.

This part of their business Jamie detested. He could forget his wrongs and be happy while his violin sang to him; but the begging for pennies was a severe trial to his pride, and he always passed around the ragged little hat with a face scarlet with shame.

Marm had none of the little lad's delicacy. Her hard face relaxed as she saw the yield of pennies in Jamie's hat, and she became greatly encouraged with her enterprise. The song was repeated again and again with success, and Jamie's wounded pride was soothed by Cherry's happy smile; for when the child understood that it was her singing which so pleased the people, a glad thrill shot through her sore little heart, first with a natural delight in her new-found power, and then with a sudden con-

sciousness that she and Jamie could help themselves in this same way, if they were only free from Marm.

Poor children! Their success made her more kind to them, but also more watchful. She forbade them to speak, even to each other, except in a lingo of broken English, pretending that they were foreigners. If people spoke to them, she answered for them; and she never permitted them to go out without her.

When night came the children were so tired they could scarcely drag their weary feet toward home.

Little Muff had moped and pined for Cherry all day, and had not touched the food Marm had left out for him. He was wild with delight on Cherry's return. He leaped around her, yelping with joy, and eagerly kissed the little hot face that bent above him.

Cherry was so tired that she sat down on the floor, and taking the little dog in her arms hugged and kissed him, sharing with him the bowl of bread and milk which Jamie brought her. She fell asleep trying to say her prayers, and never waked up when Marm undressed her and put her to bed. Then Muff cuddled close to her side, and she slept soundly until morning.

Jamie crawled into his little bunk in the corner,

but tired as he was he kept awake, while Marm counted the money they had received, and was astonished to learn that it amounted to five dollars.

"Pretty well," he thought, "for one day!" Then folding his little hands together he prayed for his dear ones at home, and asked help of the good Lord for himself and little sorrowing Cherry. Soon he too was asleep, and angels were watching the slumbers of these two gentle children, and whispering in their ears happy dreams.

The hard-faced woman sat at the table looking at her gains, and thinking of the store these stolen children should accumulate for her. No pity for them touched her heart. No thought of remorse troubled her. No angels hovered near her. They were waiting for one good, true thought. Perhaps in time it would come to her, for far away, in a mountain village, an aged mother prayed night and day even for this wicked woman.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.

HE next day was dull and rainy. The children slept late. Marm allowed them to sleep as long as they would, because they could not go out to sing. When they woke up they found a nice hot breakfast ready for them, while Marm bustled about in an excellent humor.

"So you're awake at last, are you?" she said. "I'm going out for a while. Jamie, you give sissy her breakfast, and take your own; here's some for the dog, too. Now be spry and get through, and all cleared up before I get back. Then we'll go to work."

"What are we to work at?" asked Jamie, while Cherry wondered at his courage. She was sure she would never dare to ask questions of Marm.

"More songs," replied Marm. "I'm going for some new ones. Then we'll teach the dog some

tricks." Saying which she locked the door and was gone.

Little Cherry had learned by this time to wash and dress herself, and she was soon by Jamie's side, looking as fresh and neat as a little girl away from her mother's tender care could be expected to look.

"We can't sing out to-day, Cherry," said Jamie, brightly, "but we can learn new songs."

"And that will help us along," said Cherry, earnestly. "O, Jamie, I must get home soon! What will my poor mamma do?"

The tears stood in her eyes, and in Jamie's too; but he bravely comforted her.

"Don't cry, Cherry; we will go home. Only we must be patient, and wait for a chance. If we do our best, I think we must succeed. So let's try, dear, as hard as we can."

So Cherry swallowed her grief, and ate her breakfast in quite good spirits. She talked to Jamie of her mamma and papa, and little Robbie, while he in turn told her of his parents and his beautiful home.

"I had a pony, Cherry, and a big dog; his name was Rollo, and my pony's name was Ned. O! I had such lots and lots of playthings. My papa was very rich. He and mamma loved me so much! I was their only child. They tried hard to get me

back again, I know; for once, a long, long way from my home, I saw a notice posted up, with a picture of me on it, and ever and ever so many dollars promised to the one who would bring me back."

"If we only dared tell a policeman!" murmured Cherry.

"I did once," said the little fellow, sadly. "I went up to a policeman once, and told him I was Jamie Allen, and asked him to take me home to my papa; but he only said, 'I couldn't play that on him;' and then Marm saw me, and she gave me a terrible whipping, and said if I ever spoke to a policeman again she'd have him put me in jail, and I'd never be let out again."

"Isn't she a dreadful woman?" cried poor Cherry, shivering with fear.

"Yes," answered Jamie. "She is terrible if you make her angry; but she won't treat us badly if we mind and do as she wants us to do."

"I hear her coming," said Cherry. "O, dear! I am so afraid of her!"

Jamie hurried the dishes into the closet, and Cherry put the chairs in their places. By the time Marm reached the door, the table was in order for the music lesson.

There were three new pieces. Jamie played

them over and over, until Cherry was familiar with the airs. Then he taught her the words; after which they sang them together, again and again.

When they had thoroughly learned the new songs, they sang those which Cherry had learned the day before.

They were very tired after they had done all that Marm required of them, and she allowed them to rest, while she taught Muff some new tricks.

The bright little dog soon learned to go lame on three legs, to carry a gun, aim and snap it, to dance, and to go up and down a little ladder. It took much patience, some coaxing, and a good many lessons to perfect him in these new tricks; but he soon grew quite proud of them, and greatly enjoyed the petting and praising which the children gave him when the lessons were over.

Several weeks passed in much this way. On pleasant days they would sing in the streets, on rainy days they would learn new songs. Occasionally, usually on holidays, they would take Muff to rich houses, where there were merry, happy children, and exhibit his pretty tricks. The children never failed to be delighted with the little creature.

Cherry and Jamie enjoyed these visits very much, and wished that they might occur oftener; but Marm was afraid to bring the children into too much notice, for fear that one or the other might be recognized and claimed.

She determined to keep them both, and make them support her. They seldom got less than two dollars, and often five in a single day, which was more than she could have earned in three. So she kept them closely at their tasks, continuing as watchful of them as ever; and the children seeing no chance for escape, as the days went by, became greatly discouraged.

The hot weather came on, and under its influence Cherry drooped and paled, looking more like a lily than a cherry. Jamie, too, grew languid and dull; and at last, one evening, Marm, realizing that the children were ailing, and dreading to have them sick on her hands, told them to take Muff, and have a run on the Common. They were too weary to run about, but thankful to escape from under her watchful eyes, and to breathe the air with a new sense of freedom.

They sat down near the pond and talked sadly together, while Muff frolicked around them.

"I don't believe we'll ever get away from her, Jamie," said Cherry, despairingly.

"We might now," he answered slowly, "if I only had my violin."

"Yes," said Cherry. "Muff is here. O! I

wish you had it! If we could only, only get away from her!"

"From whom do you wish to get away, children?" asked a pleasant voice close to them.

The children looked up quickly, very much frightened, but were reassured by the kindly face which looked down upon them, the owner of which they both recognized as the mate of the Portland steamer. The stranger smiled upon them, and repeated his question. "From whom do you wish to escape?"

- "From the woman who stole us?" cried Jamie, desperately, rising and facing this man, whom it seemed God had raised up for them for a friend. "She stole us both, and took us away from our homes."
- "Who is this woman? What is her name?" asked the officer.
- "She makes us call her 'Marm,'" said Jamie, "but once I saw a letter from the man who was with her when she stole me, and the name on the letter was 'Kate Hovey.'"
- "My time is short," said the officer. "If I am to help you, you must both do just as I say."

He sat down beside them, and taking a hand of each, asked them to tell him all about it, where the woman found them, and who they were.

"Why! it's the little boy and girl I saw on the steamer!" he exclaimed. "Where did you vanish? I wanted to see you again. I thought then that there was something wrong."

With wildly throbbing hearts the two children told their touching stories in a simple manner, which carried conviction straight to the officer's kind heart.

"So she stole you from New York, my lad, and the little girl from Maine. Who are you both?"

Jamie was just about to reply. A wild suspicion of whom they might really be had flashed through the officer's mind, and Jamie had opened his lips to speak, when, looking up, he saw the cruel face of the woman whom he dreaded, and upon it there was such an expression of rage, that the poor child turned weak and sick with fear.

She seized upon the children, giving them each a shake and a box, asked what they meant by telling the gentleman their lies, and dragged them off with her.

Mr. Evans sprang to his feet, and looked eagerly around for an officer. There was none to be seen in any direction. Only three rough-looking men were near, and these were partially drunk. So all he could do was to hurry after Marm, and watch where she went with the children. He was sure

that their stories were true. From the first he had distrusted this woman. He wished the children had given their names; he was almost sure that they were Jamie Allen and Cherry Halstead. Something must be done for them at once. What could he do?

He could mark the house where the woman lived, and notify the police of his suspicions. That was all that he could do; for his boat sailed in an hour, the captain was sick, and he as first officer must take his place.

"I will help them," he murmured. "Please God, I will take them home next time I come here. I will get leave of absence, and prove if their stories are not true. Courage, little ones! it is not long to wait. Only two days!"

They knew he followed them, for they could hear his footsteps coming steadily after, and with lighter hearts they returned with their jailer.

The rooms had a curious look, they thought, when they entered them. Marm stopped in the entry to speak with the woman who owned the house. A large bundle, done up in a shawl, was on the floor in the room. Everything was packed up.

The children looked at each other in dismay. It

was evident that Marm was leaving the house. They could hear her talking to the landlady.

"My children don't seem very well," she was saying to the woman, "and I'm going to take them to the mountains."

She turned as she said this, and looked threateningly at them, warning them not to speak.

They did not attempt to; they only looked wearily at each other and sighed. Just now it seemed that escape had been open to them, but hereafter she would watch them closer than ever.

"They don't look very well, certainly," said the kind-hearted, unsuspecting woman. "If you won't take offence, ma'am, I don't think you give them liberty enough; they are pretty children, but too quiet. They ought to run out and play more."

"I'm so afraid of their picking up bad words and ways, ma'am," sighed Marm, hypocritically. "They are all I have in the world, and I couldn't bear them to take to the bad."

"O, they never will," said the little woman heartily. "They have good faces. I am sorry you are going, dears, and I hope it's for your good. If you ever come this way again, I'd be glad to have you here for the children's sake, ma'am."

She bustled off, and Marm pushed the children into the room.

"We're going away again, right off," said she, quickly. "Jamie, bring me that basket." She pointed to a covered basket on the table. Jamie handed it to her, and in silent misery he and Cherry watched her pop Muff into it, and fasten down the covers.

A knock at the door startled them all. The children's hearts beat fast with hope, but it was only the kind-hearted little landlady with some cakes for their journey.

Marm thanked her, for the children were too disappointed to speak. Then telling Jamie to take the basket, she took up the bundle, and saying goodby, hurried them out.

They had been gone about an hour, when two police officers visited the house to arrest Kate Hovey, and take the children under their protection. There had been some delay in getting to the place, and owing to this delay Marm had had time to escape.

The landlady told her story, and the police told theirs.

"I thought the little things looked scared," she said. "Dear, dear me! to think that she stole them, after all, and to hear her talk of being afraid to let them out for fear of their getting into bad

company. The deceitful thing! They were pretty children too! Poor little things!"

"How long has she been gone?"

"Just about an hour, sir. What a pity you didn't get here earlier. But you'll catch them yet, I do hope."

"Said she was going to the mountains, did she?" asked one of the officers, hurriedly. "Can you tell us anything else, ma'am?"

"No, sir. I only wish I could. Dear heart! stolen, stolen! Jamie Allen right under my own roof all these weeks, and I not to know it, and ten thousand dollars' reward, just for him alone. I'm glad, any way, that I was kind to the poor little things. Dear me — dear me!"

Unable to control her surprise, she stood at the door watching the police officers, now far down the street.

As for the officers, they were provoked to find themselves thus outwitted, as they thought, but had no doubt of discovering their prisoner immediately.

They reported at headquarters. All the depots were examined, all the trains for the country telegraphed to, and all the police were notified of her escape. But in spite of these precautions, for the second time, Marm had disappeared with the two children, and they could find no trace of her.

Mr. Evans, the first mate of the steamer, was greatly distressed when he found that the police had failed in their effort to take the woman, and bitterly reproached himself for not having taken the poor children with him in spite of her.

He had written to their fathers an account of his interview with them, and dreaded now to inform them that they were lost again.

It seemed very singular too, for, according to the landlady's statement, the woman was ready to go, and waiting for the children to return; so it could not have been the fear of his interference which caused her flight. He could not understand it.

Now the facts of the case were these. The young composer who had been so much interested in Cherry, when he first heard her sing, had engaged Marm to take the children to Newport, to sing his new songs there. He was to pay her two dollars a week and expenses, and she could have whatever else she could earn through the children. She was to have them sing no songs but his, and was to start at once.

If they did well there, he would make the same arrangement with her for other places. It was through him, therefore, that she had gone, not to the mountains, as she had said, but to Newport.

If it had been made generally known who these

little singing children were, they would have been quickly found, for the young composer would have known them at once, and he was an honorable gentleman, and would gladly have assisted them to find their homes.

But it was thought best by the police to keep the case as quiet as possible, as there seemed more chance of finding the woman if she was not alarmed.

So the case was kept from the public, and all who were interested could only watch, and wait, and hope.

CHAPTER IX.

AN ENGAGEMENT.

HE poor little ones, worn and sad, reached their new quarters late at night.

The composer had taken lodgings for them in a little quiet cottage, near the principal hotels.

They could not see the ocean, it was so dark; but they could hear its beat upon the shore, and the sound made them feel more lonely and sad.

Before she would let them go to sleep, Marm stained their skins dark with the juice of walnut leaves, threatening them severely if they ever dared say again that they were stolen, and making them promise, if people spoke to them, never to answer.

"It is too cruel!" sobbed poor Cherry. "We can never get away from her now!"

"Sh! sh!" answered Jamie, cautiously; but he could not comfort her much, for his heart was as sore as hers.

But the next morning, when they could run with Muff upon the beach, and pick up pebbles and shells; when they could see the great waves come rolling in, tossing their white caps ashore, and the sail-boats go by like birds upon the water; when they felt the cool waves upon their bare feet, and the fresh breezes blowing upon their warm cheeks, they brightened up, and agreed that, although it was dreadful to be taken off just as they were to be rescued from Marm, still this was better than the hot, dusty city; and they would try to be glad and good, and if another chance offered them to escape they would embrace it.

"I'm sure God sent that kind man," said little Cherry, confidently; "and he'll send him again."

- "Yes," answered Jamie, "or some other."
- "And till then He will take care of us."
- "Yes, if we're good."
- "I try to be; don't you? I never forget my prayers now."

And Cherry looked pensively at the blue sky, as if wondering what else she could do to prove that she wanted to be good.

"I say my prayers, too," said Jamie, "but I don't love everybody. I don't love Marm. I hate her; and that is wrong."

"I'm afraid I do, too," said Cherry, sorrowfully;

"and I suppose it is wrong. I'll tell you what, Jamie, when we say our prayers, let's ask God not to let us hate Marm, and let's pray Him to make her good."

"Yes," said Jamie, "we can do that."

Unnoticed by the children, Marm had drawn near and heard their last words.

The tears sprang to her eyes, and she turned quickly away and walked off by herself. Her heart was touched. That these children, whom she had wronged so much, should artlessly talk of praying for her she could not forget.

After that morning she was kinder to them; her conscience had begun to work.

She tried to smother her conscience, and to banish from her mind the children's words, but she could not entirely succeed. Every now and then they would recur to her, and slowly they began to influence her life.

The little ones were allowed a holiday on the day after their arrival, and greatly they enjoyed it. They splashed in the water, rolled in the sand, and climbed the rocks, as they pleased; and they had a thoroughly happy day, as their brightened eyes and rosy cheeks proved when they went home at night.

On the next day they sang at the different hotels,

and in the afternoon gave an exhibition of little Muff's tricks upon the beach. A crowd of delighted children surrounded them, from whom the little dog earned many pennies. The little singers, too, became great favorites, and did a thriving business; while the songs which they sang grew very popular.

Many of the ladies and gentlemen became interested in the little wanderers, and often asked them questions; but Marm always answered for them, "that they were very shy, and could not be made to talk." This did not prevent the interest felt in them, however, and many little dainties and presents found their way into the children's hands. They were happier than they had been before, and really there was much to enjoy at Newport.

Both the children liked to walk on the beach, and see the fine horses and carriages, and the gaylydressed people.

"There is a pony almost like mine!" Jamie cried one day, heartily envying a little fellow who rode beside his father, laughing and talking.

"And that black horse in the buggy looks like my papa's Comet!" Cherry exclaimed.

Sometimes they would single out persons who seemed to them to resemble their parents, and pretend that they lived with them and shared their pleasures. Out of these fancies they gained much comfort. Childhood is so blest that in the midst of its gravest sorrows it can grow smiling and light-hearted.

Marm kept them at Newport after the season was over, until the very cold weather came. They were very successful, continuing to please all who heard them, and earning a good deal of money.

Just before they left, when the children were actually looking forward to returning to their kind landlady in Boston, a prominent temperance lecturer arrived at the city.

He heard their music, talked with Marm, and finally decided to take them out west with him in the spring, to sing in several temperance meetings of which he had charge.

Marm said nothing to them of the change in her plans, but they soon found out that they were going farther away from home. The journey was long and wearisome, and they were thoroughly tired out before they reached its end.

While spring advanced, Cherry was taken sick with a fever, and even Marm was afraid that she would die.

The little thing was worn and weak with grief and exposure. She seemed to have no strength left to baffle the disease; she lay, day after day, moaning with pain, only soothed by Jamie's loving hands, but unconscious of all around her.

Little Muff nestled beside her, eating little, full of mute sympathy for his gentle mistress.

No persuasion could induce Jamie now to play or sing. He sat by Cherry's side, waiting upon her, doing what he could to soothe her, and refused to leave her for anything.

The doctor, whom Marm was forced to call in to attend the little girl, looked very grave. He said she was a very sick child, and nothing but the most careful nursing would save her.

Marm was thoroughly frightened; Jamie nearly heart-broken. The faithful little fellow did what he could, and mourned that it was so little. He would sit by the bedside, hour after hour, gazing sadly upon the little thin flushed face on the white pillow, and vainly longing for one conscious look or word.

The woman would look remorsefully at poor Cherry, thinking of the healthy, light-hearted child as she first saw her; then she would turn away and try to stifle her conscience, but only to be drawn again to the side of the moaning little sufferer.

One afternoon, when the child seemed sinking, she hurried out for some medicine which the doctor had ordered. He told her he would look in again in an hour; he thought the end was near.

She came back again quickly; standing an instant in the door-way, to her surprise, she heard a feeble voice,—

"Jamie?"

"O, Cherry dear, what is it?" Jamie asked, keeping back the joyful tears which rushed to his eyes, but unable to keep the glad thrill from his voice.

"Please give me some water."

The little fellow complied, putting his arm tenderly around her, and helping her to raise her head to drink from the glass which he held to her lips.

Cherry drank eagerly, then sank back on her pillows, seeming much refreshed. She felt little Muff's soft tongue gently lapping her little parched cheeks; and putting one hand weakly forward, she tenderly patted the little creature.

- "Poor little Muff!" she whispered. "I'll give him to you, Jamie."
- "Don't," sobbed the boy; "don't talk so, Cherry. You'll get well now."
- "I don't want to," she answered, wearily. "I want to go to heaven. I am so tired!"

After a pause, which was broken only by Jamie's sobs, she spoke again, —

"I'm sorry to leave you, Jamie; you have been kind to me always, and I love you dearly. Kiss me, Jamie, dear."

He tenderly kissed the little dry lips, and Cherry went on in a weaker voice,—

"Jamie, dear, if ever you get away, I want you to tell my mamma—that I longed for her—O, so much!—and kiss papa, poor papa! and dear little Robbie. Now, Jamie, I want to say my prayers."

There was another pause for breath. Then the little wasted hands were folded, the weary eyes closed, and the tired little voice sounded faint and fainter.

"God bless dear mamma, dear papa, and my dear little Robbie. Please, God, bless Jamie, and help him to get home. Please, God — forgive Marm — and bless her, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

'Now I lay me — down to sleep;
I pray the Lord — my — soul — to — keep.'"

The last word came in a faint whisper; and, sobbing beside her, Jamie finished the prayer.

In the doorway, out of sight — for she dared not disturb the sick child — stood the wretched

woman who had wrought the wrong, trembling, stricken with remorse and grief.

She fell upon her knees, and wept, and cried, -

"O God, forgive me! Do not let her die! I will take them both home! O Lord, have mercy upon me!"

Jamie's heart thrilled with delight.

"Cherry," he whispered, softly, "did you hear?"

"Yes - and God heard."

When the doctor came back, Jamie and Marm still knelt upon the floor. The room was very quiet; he approached the bed, and leaned over Cherry.

"She sleeps sweetly; she will live," he said

CHAPTER X.

MARM'S PROMISES.

R. ALLEN had sold his beautiful home in New York; he had almost given up all hope of ever seeing his little son alive again. Mrs. Allen had never been well since Jamie's strange disappearance. Now the physicians had decided that her mind was in danger, and had recommended western travel.

Mr. Halstead was also at the west, delivering temperance lectures; and by singular chance, Mr. Evans, the gentleman who had so nearly rescued the little wanderers, was now captain of a large, new steamer plying Lake Michigan between Chicago and Milwaukee.

So many children in different parts of the country had been falsely represented to be the lost child, Jamie Allen, that Jamie's father had concluded that the child, of whom Mr. Evans had written to him, must have been another impostor trained to

tell the pitiful story by some one anxious to claim the large reward offered for information of the child. Still he was anxious to see the boy.

Mr. Evans had not mentioned Jamie's violin; indeed, he knew nothing about that; and since the very mysterious departure of all from Boston, there was something in the case that he could not understand himself.

About little Cherry, however, there was no uncertainty; her description, and that of the little dog Muff, answered so exactly that Mr. Halstead lived in the hope of seeing his child again. It was some comfort to feel that she had been seen alive and well, although unhappy. He wrote hopefully to Mrs. Halstead, assuring her that the police would leave nothing undone. Yet his heart failed as days and weeks passed, and nothing more was heard from them.

Cherry, weak and almost helpless, lay for days, hovering between life and death; but, thanks to the careful nursing of Jamie, she gradually gained strength and color. During her illness Jamie's parents arrived at the city, and made a lengthy stay at one of the large hotels, and Cherry's father was lecturing throughout the surrounding country.

To do Marm justice, she tried now in every way to make amends to Cherry. Oranges, grapes,

and figs were provided to tempt her appetite, and she assured the child every day, that as soon as she was well enough to travel, she should be taken back to her mother.

And Cherry, though very weak, was happy, and many were the plans her little head and Jamie's concocted as she lay slowly coming back to health.

But their trials were not yet over; for, when the little girl was well enough to be dressed and move about, Marm was taken ill with the same fever which had proved so nearly fatal to Cherry. She begged of the children not to desert her.

"Do not leave me," she said. "I will surely take you back when I get well. You cannot go alone; you could not earn much without me; people would cheat you; you might get lost again. O, children, let me see you safely home!"

"We will not leave you," they promised; and they tried to ease and soothe her.

The doctor tried to get her to go to the hospital, but she would not. She paid the woman with whom they lodged to look after her; and as soon as Cherry felt able, she allowed the children to go out and earn money by singing, as before; but before allowing this, she said to them one day, when they were alone,—

[&]quot;Children, I want to speak to you."

They came and stood beside her.

"Shut the door softly, Jamie."

He obeyed her, closing it carefully.

- "I want to tell you something you must know," she said, sorrowfully. "Jamie, do you remember where you lived with your parents?"
- "Yes'm," answered Jamie; "at Melville, in New York."
- "Yes. My husband and I stole you. He thought to get a great fortune from your father. I don't know where he is now. I think he is dead. Your father is a very rich man, Jamie, and has offered a great deal of money for you. You must not tell any one who you are; for some person as wicked as I was might find it out, and keep you for the money. Cherry belongs in a town called Sherburn, not far from Portland. If I live I will take you both home. If I don't, you can tell the doctor your story, and he will help you, I think, for he seems a good man."
 - "Yes'm," said Jamie; "we'll do as you say."
 - "We hope you will get well," said Cherry, softly.
- "I hope the Lord will let me take you home," she exclaimed.
 - "I hope so," echoed Jamie.
- "There is one thing more I want to tell you. In this bag around my neck there are fifty dollars. If

I don't get well, give the doctor twenty, to see me buried decently; the rest you and Cherry may have to help you home. Now, dry your tears,"—for both children were crying,—"and you can go out and begin earning money for yourselves."

Just before they went out, however, the lecturer, whose plans had been interfered with by Cherry's illness, looked in to see how they were getting along. He was sorry to see Marm so ill, but very glad to find Cherry better.

- "Your cheeks are beginning to look quite pink again, my little maid," he said, kindly, smoothing her curls with a fatherly touch. "Do you think you you will be well enough to sing at my lecture next Wednesday?"
 - "O, yes, sir!" Cherry exclaimed.
- "Well, then, come out with me now, and I'll get you a new frock to wear. You may come, too, my lad, and see what I can do for you."

He was a very kind-hearted man; and believing the children to be very poor, and wishing them to appear well at the lecture, he decided to buy them suitable clothes.

For Cherry, he found a pretty white frock, with broad blue sash, a frill for her neck, and a ribbon for her hair. For Jamie, a neat blue suit, with collar and necktie; and nice stockings and boots for both. He was evidently used to providing for children, and seemed nearly as pleased as these little ones when he saw their delight at his gift.

"Now, keep those clothes carefully," he said, "and mind and learn the songs perfectly. I'll run round and hear you sing them to-morrow; and the next day I'll be round, too, in time to take you to the hall."

The children promised to be careful of the clothes, and attentive to the songs, and ran home in high glee.

- "I'd rather tell him than the doctor, Jamie," said Cherry, confidently.
- "We will tell him if we have to tell any one," Jamie answered; "but we must remember our promise to Marm."
 - "O, of course," said Cherry.

On reaching their room she gave the bundles of clothes a satisfied pat, exclaiming, with girlish delight,—

- "O, Jamie, isn't it nice to have some good clothes?"
- "Yes," he said, "indeed it is. We will keep them very nice to go home in."

So they laid them carefully away in the one bureau the poor little room afforded, and then sat down to learn the music lessons, practising very softly, so as not to disturb Marm, who was sound asleep.

- "She was quite bad just now," said the woman who took care of her. "She talked queerly about you children, too."
- "What did she say?" asked Jamie, pushing back the hair from his forehead, and pausing in the midst of the piece he was playing.
- "She seemed to think you were stolen," answered the woman, looking curiously at them both.
 - "Did she?" said Jamie.
- "Yes, and she was dreadfully worried about you. She kept saying, 'O, I must get them back! I must get them back!"
- "Poor Marm!" murmured little, generous Cherry, softly.
- "Where did you come from?" asked the woman, inquisitively.
 - "From Boston," Jamie answered.
 - "Had you lived there long?" she continued.
- "Not very," answered Jamie, briefly. "We went there to sing. Come, Cherry, we must learn our music, or we won't be ready for Mr. Curtis."

And he began practising again so diligently that the woman was obliged to let him alone, although she inwardly resolved to find out more about her strange lodgers. The children determined to guard against her curiosity; they had decided to appeal to Mr. Curtis if Marm did not get well, and they rather distrusted this inquisitive landlady.

They felt grateful to Mr. Curtis for his kind interest in them, for their pretty new clothes, and for his friendly words, while they felt instinctively that they could trust him. Their experience with Marm, and her late warning to them, had made them wise beyond their years. They were sorry for her, and hoped that she would get well, and they bore her no resentment. Yet they could not forget that she had brought all their suffering upon them, and they could not be expected to feel much affection for her.

CHAPTER XI.

A GLIMPSE OF MUFF.

R. HALSTEAD had a few hours in Milwaukee. He was expected to speak at a temperance meeting in the evening, and having some time on his hands, was walking about in the poorer part of the city, distributing temperance tracts and kind words; and now and then, when a deserving case met his attention, giving substantial help in the way of food or money, as was his custom. He did a great deal of good in this way; his kindly sympathy touched people's hearts, and they respected and believed him.

He did not often refer to himself; but sometimes, when men would tell him that he knew nothing about the temptation to drink, or the difficulty of reforming, he would answer, —

"Yes, my friend; I know it all. I was fond of drinking once, myself."

And knowing this, that he had once been subject

to the passions which bound them, and that he had thrown aside their chains and freed himself, many felt that he could help them, and made efforts for themselves.

On this occasion, as he walked along doing whatever he could, and wishing that it could be more, as he turned into the poorest street he had yet seen, and was passing a dilapidated old house, he heard a cry of pain, and paused to listen. Suddenly the door flew open, and a little white dog, half frantic with pain and fright, dashed against him, with a howl, and then flew up a narrow court and into the street beyond.

Mr. Halstead stood for an instant motionless with surprise, then he darted after the frightened little creature, crying, —

"Muff! Muff! Here, Muffie — Muff! Muff!" Gaining the street, he looked up, down, and around in every direction. No dog was to be seen.

He did not give up, but looked thoroughly around, men, women, and children joining, unasked, in the search, till the commotion attracted the attention of an officer.

He asked questions of the people, and as none of them had recognized the dog, told Mr. Halstead it was not probable that he belonged in the immediate neighborhood, and had most likely gone home. On hearing the description of the house from which he had flown in such fright, the officer recognized that as the home of a dog-fancier who had been before the courts more than once on charges of stealing dogs. He promised to procure a warrant at once for the man, and they went together to the house to question him. They found him nursing a severe bite inflicted by the dog.

"So you're bitten, are you, Joe?" asked the officer, glancing with pity upon three or four half-starved looking dogs that were sniffing around the dirty room.

"Ay, I'm bit," the man replied, looking at them surlily.

"This gentlemen happened to be passing," continued the officer, motioning towards Mr. Halstead, "and he recognized the dog; in fact, 'tis one that was stolen from him a year ago."

"And I can make it worth your while to tell me where you found him now," said Mr. Halstead.

"Pesky little brute!" growled Joe, tying a rag around his smarting hand. "He don't belong nowhere. He's been strayin' round, lost, these three days. I meant to take care of him, an' got bit for my pains."

"It's no such thing," said Mr. Halstead. "The dog was white and clean. If he had been straying

around for one day even, his long hair would have been draggled and soiled. Why can't you speak the truth, my man? I'll give you twenty dollars if you will lead us to the place where you picked up that dog."

For almost any other dog he had ever known Joe would have taken that offer eagerly; but he had seen Muff perform, and knew he could readily sell such a well-trained dog for a hundred dollars. He determined to get possession of him again, and so continued obstinately to persist in the story he had told at first.

At last the officer, losing all patience, arrested him, and carried him off, telling Mr. Halstead that probably a night at the station-house would refresh the fellow's memory, if he really stole the dog.

Mr. Halstead told the officer about the disappearance of his little girl with this dog, and gave a description of Cherry.

The officer did not think the dog-fancier knew anything about the child, or he would have been more frightened; but he saw a chance of tracing her through the little dog, and thought the man might be frightened into showing them the house where the dog belonged, if, indeed, he really knew. Meanwhile he assured the anxious father that everything should be done to trace the child.

So Mr. Halstead sent a message to his wife, and spent the rest of the day in searching, and making inquiries, but all to no purpose; and when the time came for him to go to the hall and give his lecture, he had no news. He waited until the last minute, and then hurried to fill his engagement.

CHAPTER XII.

GOOD NEWS.

UNE had come again, the first of June; the thrushes and finches were flying to and fro in Mrs. Halstead's garden, with wisps of hay or bits of moss and feathers in their tiny beaks. The robins had settled quietly in the cherry tree; and the little brown sparrows had gone to their old quarters in the climbing roses, which were in leaf and bud, but not in flower.

The cherry tree was shaking down its white blossoms, like flakes of snow, and Robbie Halstead stood beneath, putting up his dimpled hands to catch the pretty things, laughing and shouting with childish glee.

His mother stood beside him with a smile upon her lips for him, but with a sad wistfulness in her dark eyes for the little daughter who had been lost a year.

Dear little Cherry, everything was suggestive of

her. The cottage stood, with its broad, low windows open to the sun, and it seemed as if the little golden brown head must look forth from them, and the sweet voice ripple into song. The garden where she had played seemed full of her presence. The very tree beneath which they stood had suggested her little pet name. Here, in this very spot, when Cherry was a baby, her mother stood with the child in her arms, while Mr. Halstead gathered the fruit. He held a spray of the cherries towards the child, whose baby delight manifested itself in such pretty ways, that her father named her Cherry.

The mother's heart longed for her darling with the sweet face, and the gentle, loving ways. How hard it was to think of the dainty, petted child, wandering about, singing to strangers! How she longed to take the little weary head to her bosom, and comfort her darling, as only a mother can comfort a child!

She had written a tender, consoling letter to Mrs. Allen, sympathizing with her in her affliction, and begging her to feel as she did, that while the children were alive there was great hope of recovering them, and assuring Mrs. Allen, that she fully believed, with the Lord's help, they would soon be found.

As for Robbie, she never would let him go out

of her sight. She knelt beside him now, murmuring,—

"O, my darling, how I wish your dear little sister would come home!"

"Sister tum home," lisped Robbie, throwing his chubby arms around her neck, and imprinting on her cheek a comforting baby kiss. "She is tumming."

He said this so earnestly and decidedly, that his mother hugged him to her breast with a thrill of rapture; the baby words seemed prophetic; they rang in her ears all day.

When she returned to the house, while Robbie took his nap she arranged Cherry's little garments and toys with loving care; then she seated herself at work with a thrill of excitement she could not overcome.

Towards afternoon there came a violent ringing at the door-bell, and Mary, the maid, came up with a telegraphic despatch. Hastily Mrs. Halstead tore open the envelope, and read, with wildly beating heart,—

[&]quot;I have seen Muff. Only a glimpse; but I'm sure it was Muff. Leave some one in charge, and come to Milwaukee at once.

[&]quot;ROBERT HALSTEAD."

The date was the same day, and very near the hour. Trembling with excitement, she wrote the return message,—

"I start to-night, with Robbie."

Mary was a faithful girl, and could be left in charge of the house with perfect safety. She was not at all afraid, and was overjoyed at the prospect of seeing Cherry at home again; besides which, Mrs. Halstead's brother, who had married, was living close by, and Mary could call upon him in any difficulty.

So she flew about, helping Mrs. Halstead to make her hurried preparations for departure.

"To think of seeing the dear child again!" she exclaimed, wiping the tears from her cheeks with her apron. "O, that blessed little Muff!"

"But it is not certain that Cherry is there," said Mrs. Halstead, wiping away her own tears. "I don't dare to hope too much; but it's the best trace we've had, and we must follow it up."

"O, hope for the best, ma'am!" exclaimed Mary, affectionately. "The sweet child!" she went on, wiping some tear-drops which had fallen on a pile of Robbie's little frocks. "I shall spoil everything I touch, with my foolishness. O, Mrs. Halstead!

may the Lord have pity on the hard hearts that stole that child from her home!"

Mrs. Halstead's sister, happening in on an errand, staid and helped. She dragged out the travelling trunk which had lain idle for years, and assisted in packing it.

- "You'll put in some things for Cherry, I suppose," she said; and the mother nodded with a smile and a tear.
- "Why don't you leave Robbie with me?" asked her sister. "I'd take the best of care of him."
- "I don't doubt that," replied Mrs. Halstead; "but I couldn't spare him, and I couldn't go alone;" and she caught Robbie from his crib and kissed him fondly, while he rubbed his sleepy eyes, and looked on in astonishment at the unaccustomed confusion.

The packing was soon finished; all the arrangements were made for the long journey. Mrs. Halstead's brother drove them to the station with Comet, and put her into the express train, with the best of wishes for success in her undertaking. She started bravely, with only Robbie for her companion; as for him, he travelled like a little man, giving his mamma but little trouble, and interesting all his fellow-travellers by his winning ways and baby prattle.

CHAPTER XIII.

MUFF STOLEN.

AMIE and Cherry soon learned the songs given them by Mr. Curtis, and had nothing more to do.

The room was in order; Marm was too sick to be helped by them; the air was getting close, and the landlady who watched by Marm's side was growing altogether too inquisitive; so they decided to go out into the street, and sing for themselves, allowing Muff to go with them.

At first they sang in the stores, and did very well, gaining many pennies, which Jamie felt less shame at receiving because these were earned with an honest purpose.

People were interested, as they always were, in the two pretty children. Jamie, with his dark eyes and clear-cut face, full of the soul of his music; Cherry, with her dark-brown hair and eyes of wistful blue, her graceful form swaying unconsciously to the rhythm of the violin, and her sweet, bird-like voice floating out in clear, full tones; they were a pretty pair.

After a while they left the stores, and went to the hotel—the very hotel where Jamie's father and mother were staying. They played here before the office, and, receiving their pennies, went on towards the houses.

It was Wednesday afternoon, and the children were out of school, and our little musicians soon wished that Marm was with them. Beneath her stern eye no one had ever ventured to trouble them; but now some rude boys annoyed them by teasing Muff. They moved on, but their little tormentors followed them, and quite a number of other children followed after for fun. Cherry was greatly distressed, and nearly crying.

- "Give us a tune," said a rude boy.
- "Yes," cried another, "play, and I'll make your little bear dance."

And he made a plunge at Muff, who barked and snapped at him.

- "Ain't he spunky?" cried a third, in high glee.
- "Bet you dar'sn't do that again, Lou!"
- "Ho! dar'sn't I? Come, Fiddle, squeak up."
- "I'll tell you what," said Jamie, facing them, and speaking quietly, "if you will go away and let us

alone, I'll show you what this little dog can do. He knows ever so many tricks."

"Let's see what he can do," said an older voice; and turning quickly, the children saw that a man had joined the group beside them. He was an ill-looking man, shabbily dressed; his hair hung into his eyes, partly hiding them, and he carried a covered basket on his arm; he seemed friendly to the children, and ordered those who had troubled them to behave themselves, or else to go off.

They all stood around quietly enough now while Jamie put little Muff through his tricks.

"Sit up, sir," said Jamie, first; and Muff immediately "sat up," straight as a soldier.

"Now, walk," said Jamie; and the little creature obeyed, gravely stepping out, with his forepaws in the air.

Jamie began to play, slowly at first, then faster and faster, while Muff changed his walk to a dance, keeping time to the music.

"Be a dead dog," said Jamie, presently; and Muff dropped to the ground, closed his eyes, and stretched out all his little limbs stiff and straight.

"Go lame," said Jamie. Instantly he jumped up and limped around on three legs, holding up the fourth very pitifully.

Next Jamie and Cherry, kneeling down, made

hoops of their arms, and Muff jumped through and back; after which he sat up with his fore paws folded, waiting for further orders.

"That will do for to-day," said Cherry, patting him fondly. "O, you darling!" she added, giving him a good hug, "how nicely you did everything!"

Muff was as pleased as anybody. He capered around, wagging his tail, and jumping upon his little mistress, until she took him in her arms to carry.

"He's a nice little dog," said the man, turning to go. "He's cute enough, too. Want to sell him?"

"O, no, indeed!" said Cherry, alarmed. "Come, Jamie, let's go home."

"I'll give you two dollars," said the man, setting down his basket. "Come?"

"No," said Cherry, hugging him tight. "I wouldn't sell him for two thousand."

The man laughed and walked off. The children who had followed went home, and Cherry and Jamie were left with Muff.

"Let's get him some meat for a treat, Cherry," Jamie suggested, "he did so nicely."

"I was just thinking of that," said Cherry; "there is a butcher's shop."

So the children went in, and the butcher gave them some little scraps of meat for two cents. Muff ate them with great relish, then trotted proudly out of the shop with a little bone which he had picked up. He took it to a neighboring doormat to gnaw at it, and the children sat down upon the curbstone to count their money. This took some time, for it was mostly in pennies, the jingling of which prevented their hearing the footsteps behind them, or the low growling of Muff.

A sharp yelp aroused them, and, looking quickly round, they saw the man who had asked to buy the dog, taking to his heels, while Muff was nowhere to be seen.

Cherry burst into a passion of tears, and ran after him. Jamie followed, shouting, —

"Stop, sir! stop! Give us back our dog!"

It was of no use. The man ran on, out of sight, with poor little struggling Muff in his basket. Nobody interfered; nobody cared for two poorly-dressed little children crying bitterly in the street.

"I can't sing to-night," sobbed Cherry. "I can't do anything without Muff."

Jamie did not know what to say or do; but presently an idea occurred to him.

"Let's go back and tell the butcher."

They went. He was a kind-hearted man, and told them he would help them. He saw the thief pass the store; he would know the dog again; then

he called in a policeman, and spoke to him about it. So, though still feeling very badly, they went home comforted.

Jamie had put away the violin and the pennies, and Cherry was washing her tear-stained face, when they heard the familiar sound of little claws scratching eagerly at the door. They flew to open it. In bounded Muff, half wild with terror, and hid himself in Cherry's loving arms.

His mouth and paws were stained with blood; his little heart beat wildly, and he panted for breath; but he was safe and unhurt, and great was the joy of his little mistress.

The tear stains quickly disappeared now; the child's face was wreathed with happy smiles. They all ate their supper of bread and milk together, and Jamie washed and put away the bowls and spoons. Then he and Cherry sang over the two new songs again; after which the landlady helped them to dress in their nice new clothes.

She brushed and curled Cherry's long hair, and arranged the ribbons nicely over the pretty white frock. She brushed Jamie's hair, and arranged his collar and necktie. When the dressing was all completed, she surveyed them with mingled pride and amazement.

[&]quot;Why, you are different children!" she said.

"You look splendidly! After all, it's half the battle to have nice clothes."

The children looked at each other with pleasure, wishing that they might never have to put on their old rags again.

When Mr. Curtis came in, he looked gratified at the change in their appearance.

"How is your mother?" he asked.

They had both been thinking of their parents, and for an instant did not understand him. Then Jamie said,—

- "O, Marm, you mean? She's about the same. The doctor's been twice to-day."
- "Then she isn't your mother?" said Mr. Curtis, quickly. "Is she yours?" turning to Cherry.
 - " No, sir."
- "How came you with her, then?" asked the gentleman, greatly interested, while the landlady stood by, with mouth and eyes wide open, swallowing every word.

Jamie looked frankly into his face.

"I wish we might tell you," said he, longingly; "but, when she was taken sick, she made us promise not to tell our story to any one unless she died. She promised to take us home herself if she got well, and I think we can trust her; for she prayed to God to let her get well for our sakes."

- "Who are you, then?"
- "We are stolen children."
- "Good land, alive!" broke in the landlady. "I always thought there was something wrong."
- "This is very singular," said Mr. Curtis, thoughtfully; "very singular. I won't advise you to break a promise, children; but I'll come to-morrow and talk with you. I will look after you, and be your friend. Meanwhile I will take you under my protection. Come now, or we shall be late."

Cherry kissed Muff, and put him in a chair.

- "Don't let him go out, please, while we're gone," she said.
- "No, indeed," replied the landlady. "I'll take care of him. Good night, sir; good luck, children. Stolen, stolen! Good land, alive!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISCOVERY.

HE hall was crowded. Two famous lecturers were to be present, and everybody was anxious to hear them.

There had been much good temperance work done in the city by lectures, relief societies, and praying bands; and there was occasion for much more, for in certain portions intemperance was rife. Mr. Curtis was well known here. His earnest, hearty manner had gained him many admirers, while his simple, touching words won the hearts of others.

To-night he spoke of the change in Milwaukee, congratulated its citizens on the great stride temperance had taken there, and begged them not to pause in the good work, but to keep from temptation themselves, and to lend a helping hand to others.

He drew living pictures of the difference between

the happy homes of temperance and industry, and the poverty and squalor of the drunkard's home.

"I know all about the horrors of thirst, the terrible tendency to yield to temptation, and the fiery trial of reform!" he cried. "I have been through it all. I was myself a drunkard.

"My friends, what do you think reformed me? I was going home one night, not drunk, for an exception. It was after a crazy time when I had assaulted my own dear wife and children. I drew near my door, feeling quite satisfied with myself, when I heard my oldest little girl cry out,—

"'You needn't hide, children. Father is sober to-night!'

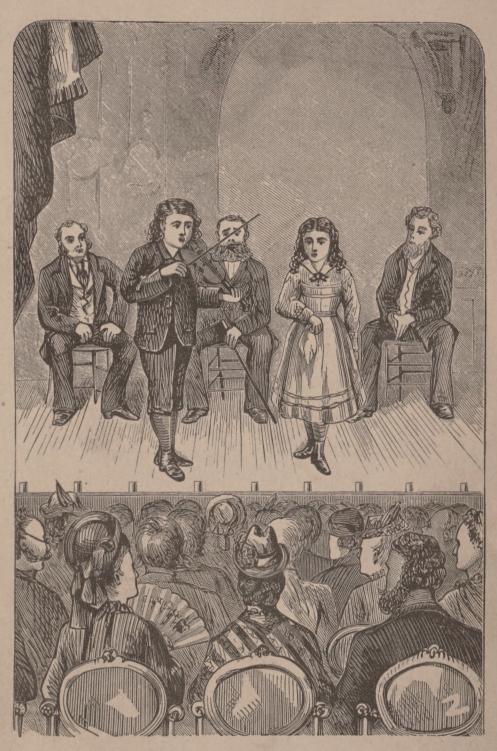
"Her words cut to my heart like a knife.

"O, the misery, the sorrow, the shame and crime of a home where loving, innocent children hide from their father, because he is drunk!"

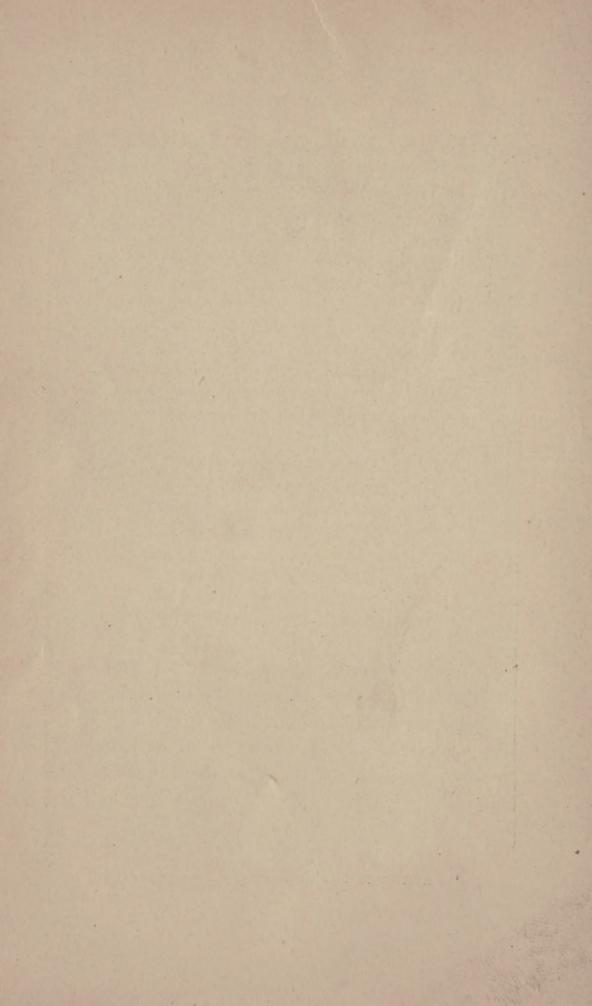
He stepped from the platform, and led up Jamie and Cherry, who sang, to the music of the lad's violin, a little, simple, pathetic song.

"FATHER IS SOBER TO-NIGHT.

"O, Eddie, come out of the corner!
And Kitty, come into the light!
I see him; I hear him; he's coming,
And father is sober to-night.



"Father is sober to-night." — Page 100.



So, come, children, come, let us greet him; When sober he's loving and kind; Let's run to the doorway and meet him; Bright faces and glad let him find."

"Ho, Eddie, my boy! is that you, sir?
But what is that scar on your brow?
What? 'I gave it to you,' my darling,
'When drunken last night, in a row?'
And Kitty, my bright little fairy,
Did I hurt you, my birdie? Your hand?
And mother? 'Her face in a bandage?'
God help me! I don't understand.

"Did I do all that to my dear ones?

Not I, but the demon of drink;
O! if it can so overpower me,

'Neath sorrow and shame I must sink.

Come, mother, come, children, and kiss me;

Forgive all this sorrow and pain;
I promise, — God help me! — I promise

I'll never touch liquor again."

The pathetic words, the modesty of the children, and their sweet voices, charmed the audience, who demanded the song again and again.

They repeated it twice; then, as the people continued to applaud and call for them, they sang another.

"FATHER, LITTLE WILLIE'S DYING.

"Father, little Willie's dying,
And he wants you, father dear.
Mother's by the cradle crying,
And I came to seek you here.
Father, come and kiss the baby;
Leave your glass, and come with me.
He has called for you, and may be
You his smile once more may see.
He is dying, — he is dying;
And his parting smile you'll miss.
Father, come, the time is flying;
Come and give him one last kiss.

"Father, come, the time is flying,
Willie was your little pet;
Surely you will please him, dying;
Father, you will not forget.
All day long he's talked of heaven
And the angels, bright and fair;
Prayed that you might be forgiven;
Begged us all to meet him there.
He is dying, — he is dying;
And his parting smile you'll miss.
Father, come, the time is flying;
Come and give him one last kiss."

Many a rough man in the audience drew his hand across his eyes to wipe away the tears as this song was sung. The plaintive air, and the pathetic

voices of the children giving to the simple words a power which was felt by all.

While they were still singing there were some late arrivals at the hall—two gentlemen and a lady. One of the gentlemen was the other lecturer, who was to speak after Mr. Curtis. They were shown to the front seats, where room was made for them, and when seated they turned their attention towards the little singers.

What was there so remarkable about the children as to cause the lady to start violently, and the gentleman to utter exclamations? They were evidently very much excited. What did it mean?

When the song ceased, the lecturer started from his seat with a cry of joy; he sprang upon the stage forgetful of the place and the people around him, and sweet little Cherry Halstead was clasped once more in her father's arms.

"O, papa! papa!" was her cry of delight, as she nestled close to his heart. "I am so glad, papa!"

Jamie looked at them with joyful surprise; but suddenly noticing that some one else was moving towards the stage, he started, trembling violently; then, with a joyful sob, he darted forward, violin in hand, crying hysterically,—

"Father, mother! O, mamma! mamma!"
The audience were powerfully excited. They

rose to their feet, and many of them stood upon the seats in order to see the group around the stage.

"What is it? Who are they?" was the cry, repeated again and again.

Somebody ventured to surmise that they were lost children, and this went round the hall like wildfire.

Mr. Curtis stepped down from the platform and spoke to Mr. Halstead, then shook hands heartily with him. After this he congratulated the gentleman and lady with Jamie; then mounted the platform, and addressed the audience, who instantly became so quiet that the dropping of a pin could have been heard in the hall.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have to-night witnessed a scene of extraordinary joy. We have seen the restoration of two stolen children to their parents. The little girl, whose modest bearing and sweet voice have charmed you so to-night, is little Cherry Halstead, the daughter of the gentleman who will address you shortly. She was stolen from her home a year ago."

A murmur of applause, growing to a cheer, long and heartily given, here interrupted the speaker. When it was quiet again, he resumed.

"The promising boy who sang with her, and who handles his violin wonderfully for one so

young, is the child of whom you have so often heard, for whose recovery the whole country has been moved,—the lost boy, Jamie Allen."

There was great excitement now. People stood upon the seats stretching their necks, and jostling one another to get a sight of the children and their parents, while loud hurrahs, swinging caps, and waving handkerchiefs, testified their heartfelt sympathy.

Waiting for the clamor to subside, Mr. Curtis continued:—

"My friends, we thank you for your kind sympathy. For two years, all over this great country, hearts have ached for the lonely grief of the parents of Jamie Allen. Immense rewards have been offered, the whole country vigilant, but seemingly to no purpose. The boy was stolen from his home while playing upon the sidewalk, by the man, John Hovey, and his wife Kate; both of them — drunk! They hoped to secure a large reward from his rich parents, and deliberately planned this cruel scheme, but their villany brought its own reward. They could not obtain the money without being delivered to justice.

"John Hovey is dead. He was shot while attempting to break into a house at New York. The woman is probably dying. You will be glad

to know that she has repented her wicked course, and longs to atone to these poor children. One word for them, and I have done. These little ones, in the midst of an overwhelming sorrow, have borne themselves like Christian martyrs. They have lived with crime, unsullied by it. They have always tried to do what they knew to be right. They bear no resentment to the woman who has wronged them. It is through their influence that she has asked for forgiveness and mercy from the Lord.

"O, may He bless the cause of Virtue and Temperance! May such crimes as these be unknown in our land. May theft, rapine, and murder be crushed under foot together with intemperance,—the scorpion that nourishes them."

He made way for Mr. Halstead, who spoke with emotion.

- "I cannot deliver my lecture to-night, kind friends. In its place I will tell you a short story.
- "Some years ago, I was asked to sign a temperance pledge. O, would that I had done so! What sorrow and shame, what remorse and anxiety, the act would have saved me!
- "I was a young man then, proud in my own strength. I laughed. I could take care of myself. I would not sign. Let others take the pledge, I

said, if they like; no doubt it is a great help to many; but it is a confession of weakness. I do not need it. There is no danger of my becoming a drunkard. I can drink a little wine now and then without hurting myself. I could not realize that the deepest danger lay in indulging this first desire for extra stimulus; so I went on in my own path, refusing the aid of this great safeguard, blindly trusting in myself. A year ago I drank wine freely. I had been intoxicated several times. My gentle wife was grieved and anxious. My home was feeling the influence of my excesses. I was conscious that in the use of wine I could not control myself.

"One day, while riding with my dear little daughter — God bless her! — she innocently reproached me.

"'Papa, are you going to Rice's tavern? That was why mamma looked so sad. She always does look sad when you go to Rice's. What makes you go there, papa?'

"Her words cut my heart. I determined that my wife and children should not suffer through me. I resolved, — not that I would never go there again, — but that this time should be the last time, and I promised my little girl accordingly.

"How happy my promise made her, - sweet,

ministering child! I left her carolling a merry song in the garden of the hotel, while I went to yield to temptation for the last time. I forgot my good resolutions. I became intoxicated. My helpless child was stolen from the garden, I presume, by this woman, Kate Hovey, and from that day to this I have never seen or heard from her, although no pains or money were spared in the search for her.

"I will pass over my anguish and despair, and the grief of my heart-broken wife. I resolved to devote myself to the cause of temperance, and to search the world for my child. To-night I found her. God has richly blessed me. May He so bless our good work!"

The audience were dismissed, and crowded around to congratulate the happy group.

One gentleman who came forward was recognized as Mr. Evans, Captain Evans now, the former officer of the Portland steamer.

Jamie and Cherry were delighted to see him, and have him witness their joy; while he and Mr. Curtis were cordially thanked for their kindness to the children.

Mr. Curtis got a carriage for them, and Mr. and Mrs. Allen, Jamie, Cherry, and her father drove

off for the hotel. But first Cherry begged that they might go and get Muff.

"Why, where is Muff?" asked Mr. Halstead. "I thought he was lost. I saw him flying through the streets this afternoon, but could not get near him."

"He came straight home," said Cherry. "He is there now."

So they drove to the landlady's house to get the faithful little dog. Mr. Halstead briefly told the landlady of the recovery of the children, and promised to see Mrs. Hovey the next day.

Then the happy party drove to the hotel for the night.

"Tell me once more, papa," said Cherry, "about mamma and Robbie."

"They are well, my darling, and coming to us as fast as the cars can bring them."

When the happy child was asleep, her father sent a despatch to meet the train at Chicago —

"Jamie and Cherry are here. They are happy and well."

CHAPTER XV.

HOME AND HAPPINESS.

HERRY, Cherry!" cried Jamie, bursting into the sunny room where Cherry sat playing with Muff, "guess who's come."

"Mamma!" cried Cherry, springing to her feet, and tumbling Muff on to the floor.

"Robbie, you darling!" as the little fellow toddled into the room; "you little pet,"—and she covered him with kisses,—"do you remember sister Cherry?"

"Mother! O, mother!" she cried, without waiting for his answer, and sprang into her mother's arms, the long mother-want filling her heart.

"My darling! my precious little daughter, we will never part again."

"O, never, mamma!" cried Cherry, with a shudder. "O, I did want you so much!"

Her mother folded her close to her heart, and kissed her again and again.

"You are thinner, my darling," she murmured, "and paler, but mamma will take care of you now."

Here Robbie began to whimper, and Cherry flew to him.

"Kiss me, little brother. Kiss Cherry. Let sister take off your things."

She gently removed his hat and sack, and then took him in her lap. Robbie nestled there confidingly, while Cherry looked, with a beaming smile, to her father and mother.

- "Isn't he precious? He's not a bit afraid of me. Do you think he remembers me, mamma?"
 - "Perhaps so," said her mother, smiling.
- "How he has grown!" continued Cherry. "See him look at Muff! Come, Muff, don't you know the baby?"

Muff capered around them, and kissed the little fat hands, to Robbie's delight.

Jamie made acquaintance with the little fellow, who was not at all bashful, and the three had a merry time, or rather the four, for Muff made half the fun.

Jamie's mother came to the door to see if he was safe. She could not bear to have him out of her sight. Mrs. Halstead brought her into the room to rejoice with her at their new happiness, and soon in

came Mr. Allen to offer his congratulations, and to admire little Robbie.

Jamie and Cherry are like brother and sister," said Mrs. Allen. "I don't know how they will bear being separated."

"They shall not be separated," said Jamie's papa; "they have suffered enough. We have sold our home. We will make a new one near Cherry's."

"How nice that will be!" cried the delighted children.

"And Robbie shall be my brother, too," said Jamie.

"There is a nice place, close by ours, for sale now," said Mrs. Halstead, smiling. "Perhaps it may please you. The house is large and handsome, and stands upon a hill. There is a pond on the grounds, and a beautiful grove."

"O, papa!" cried Jamie.

His father smiled.

"We will look at it, my boy," he said.

"Where are Neddy and Rollo, papa?"

"They are safe, at grandfather's."

"Is Comet at home, papa?" asked Cherry.

"Mamma, does Mary know that I'm found?"

"Yes, to both questions," replied mamma.

They were chatting merrily, when a messenger

interrupted them. Mr. Halstead went to the door, and returned looking very grave.

"Mrs. Hovey is conscious," he said. "The doctor says she cannot live, and she is very anxious to see you, children."

"Let us go," said Cherry, sadly. "Will you take us, papa? She was very kind to me when I was sick."

"Yes, my dear; I will go with you."

They hastened to put on their hats, and started for the house.

"Poor Marm!" said Jamie; "I hoped that she might get well."

"It is much better so, my dear boy," said Mr. Halstead. "If she got well, she would be sent to prison for the rest of her life. She is sorry for her wicked course, and feels that God has pardoned her. It is better for her to die."

On their way to the house they passed the butcher's shop, and stopped to let him know that Muff was safe.

The kind-hearted man was glad to know about him, and very glad for the children when he heard their story. He had not heard of Cherry, but knew about the kidnapping of Jamie Allen.

"Many's the time I've pitied you, my boy, from the bottom of my heart," he said, "and wondered if you would never get home. I little thought you would ever walk into my own shop, and speak to me. I'm right glad you've found your folks."

He gave them each a bunch of white grapes, which he could ill afford, for his fortune was not so great as his kind heart; but Mr. Halstead insisted on his taking a bank note for his kindness to the children.

They went on to the landlady's house. Marm, or Mrs. Hovey, as they now knew her, was lying very quietly, waiting for them.

- "So you've found your folks, children," she said, feebly. "I am very glad. The doctor tells me I am dying; but I can't die in peace until I hear you say that you forgive me."
- "We do; we did long ago," they both answered, heartily.
 - "And we're very sorry for you," added Cherry.
- "You are good children," said she; "I don't deserve your goodness."

And she looked gratefully at them.

Cherry glanced at her father, then leaned timidly forward, and kissed the woman's faded cheek.

Jamie followed her example.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Hovey, softly, her eyes filling with tears. "May the Lord bless you both."

"Can I do anything for you, Mrs. Hovey?" asked Mr. Halstead, greatly touched.

"If you would write to my good, old mother," she said, "and tell her that I lived long enough to repent, and to ask God's forgiveness. I know she would be glad to know it. My poor mother! I wish I could go home to ask her forgiveness."

"I will write and tell her," said Mr. Halstead, kindly. "Is there nothing else?"

She handed him the little bag of money which she had worn about her neck.

"If there's anything left, after burying me," she said, "will you send it to my mother?"

"I will," said Mr. Halstead. "Now let me read you a chapter and say a prayer."

He drew a Testament from his pocket, and read from that beautiful chapter (the fourteenth) of John.

"'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also.

- "'And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.
- "'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
- "'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.
- "'I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
- "' As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

Then, kneeling with the children, he prayed for the dying woman.

After the prayer she lay with her hands folded, and her eyes closed, praying for herself. Then, looking at the children, she asked them, faintly, to sing.

"Sing 'Jesus says that we must love him.' My mother used to sing it to me."

So they softly sang the beautiful little hymn; and while they were singing it, the poor soul, who had so gone astray, who had made so much trouble and misery, went back to the God who gave it.

Mr. Halstead did not tell the children that shows dead. They thought her asleep, and he led them gently away.

He told the landlady he would repay her for everything, and to give Mrs. Hovey a proper burial.

He wrote a comforting letter to the poor, old mother, enclosing the money just as it was given to him. How glad the faithful heart must have been to know that her erring child had died repentant!

In a few days Jamie and Cherry left Milwaukee for home. Mr. and Mrs. Allen would stop on the way to let the boy's grandfather see him again. Then they would go to Mr. Halstead's cottage until their new home was ready for them.

How pleasant was that journey eastward!

"Do you remember, Jamie," Cherry asked, "how I cried nearly all the way to Milwaukee when I found where we were going? And, after all, 'twas the very best thing we could have done."

"Yes," said he, "and how you fretted till you made yourself sick; but perhaps if you hadn't been sick, Cherry, Marm wouldn't have grown good. It was your praying for her that changed her heart."

Passing through Boston, they went to see the woman with whom they had lodged there. She was truly glad to see them, and rejoiced in their good fortune.

They parted with Jamie in Boston, his father and mother promising to arrive at the cottage on the following week.

Imagine Cherry's delight when she found herself

once more at home. Mary half smothered her with kisses; her uncle and aunt were delighted to see her, and the neighbors ran in and out — all eager to speak with their little favorite.

As soon as Cherry had time, she flew to the garden, and visited all her old nooks and haunts—the flower-beds, the cherry tree, the climbing roses, the swing, and the arbor.

She dragged Robbie's rocking-horse out for him, and then flew to visit Comet. He whinnied with pleasure, and looked very sleek and handsome. Don, the great watch-dog, came, and rubbed his rough nose in her hand. She patted his shaggy fur, calling him to go with her to visit the hens and pigeons. Muff flew by her side, and Robbie tod-dled after her wherever she went.

"Lots o' chickies. See, sister!" He panted, wanting her to admire the last downy brood.

Cherry knelt down, and clasped him in her arms, murmuring, —

"O, Robbie, darling, it is so good to be at home!"

When the Allens arrived, they were so much pleased with the neighboring place for sale that they bought it, and lived there.

So Jamie and Cherry were constant companions. They went to school together; and out of school-

time they played together. Jamie had Neddy and Rollo at the new home, and he and Cherry shared together all their books and playthings.

Once a week a gentleman from Portland rode out to give them lessons in music, the little violin and the fresh young voices being as sweet and tuneful as ever.

Now we must leave our little wanderers. We are glad to leave them safe in their loving homes; and let us remember, if we are ever tried like them with adversity, that

"Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."

THE END.

